

**TWENTY-SECOND  
SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME  
YEAR A**

**PRAYER OF THE DAY:**

All-powerful God,  
see how weak we are,  
how difficult  
for us to live your way.  
Make us brave  
in following Jesus.  
May we never give up  
when things become difficult,  
never frightened or put off  
by those who do not know you  
or your Son,  
who lives with you,  
forever and ever.

**FOCUS OF THE READINGS:**

Both of our readings focus on the cost of obedience to the will of God.

Jeremiah is constantly ridiculed and persecuted for being the bearer of God's Word to the people. His message, and he, are rejected, yet he remains faithful.

In our Gospel for today, Jesus warns his disciples he himself will suffer and even be killed for being faithful to God's message. The focus then shifts to the disciples: those who want to follow Jesus must accept the same cross, the willingness to be faithful, even if it means giving their lives.

What Jeremiah experienced and Jesus died for, the disciples must accept—the world is opposed to the message of God.

**FIRST READING: *Jeremiah 20:7-9***

*This is a reading from the prophet Jeremiah.*

Jeremiah made this prayer to God:

“O God, you are stronger than I am,  
and I let myself be trapped by you.  
Now everyone is making fun of me,  
because I tell the people  
they are going to suffer  
from the way they are living.  
And now I am the one who is suffering  
for telling them the truth.  
Sometimes I think to myself,

‘I will not talk about God anymore.  
I won't even speak in God's name.’

“But then I feel my heart burning inside me,  
and I know that I must be faithful  
and go on talking about you.”

*The Word of the Lord.*

**RESPONSE: *Psalms 63***

RESPONSE:



I will praise you, Lord, as long as I live, I will praise you.

VERSES:



1. I trust in you, your hand keeps me safe.  
2. I bless your name, for you are my help.  
3. Your love for me is bet - ter than life.

to Response

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



1. "If you would be my dis-ci-ples, ac-cept the cross and fol-low me."
2. Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, "Ac-cept the cross and fol-low me."

### GOSPEL: *Matthew 16:21-27*

*This is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.*

One day Jesus told his disciples that he had to go to Jerusalem. He explained to them that in Jerusalem the chief priests and the teachers of the law would make him suffer and then would kill him. But three days later, he would be raised from the dead. Peter took Jesus aside and said to him,

"This will never happen to you!  
God will save you."

But Jesus said to Peter,

"Be quiet! Stop talking like Satan!  
You are no help to me,  
because you are thinking  
the way people think,  
and not the way God thinks."

Then Jesus turned to his disciples and said,

"If you want to be my disciple,  
you must accept your cross and follow me.  
If you try to save your own life,  
you will lose it.  
But if you are willing to give your life for me,  
you will live forever."

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

### REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

While this Gospel is important in the on-going formation of children as well as adults, we must be cautious in reflecting on it with small children. "Accepting one's cross" must be explained in language and concrete examples appropriate to the age of the children. We want to avoid burdening them with expectations beyond their understanding and capacity to fulfill.

*After the Gospel, encourage the children to share their reflections.*

- What does Jesus mean when he says his disciples must not think only about themselves? How does this help others?
- What does Jesus mean when he says his disciples must live as he lives?
- What does Jesus mean when he says that if we are willing to give up our lives for him we will find real life?

Help the children understand "giving up our life" means living for others—living as Jesus wants us to—no matter what. This can be a real "cross" when living the Gospel in fact requires children to make difficult choices in their everyday lives.

## Twenty-Second Sunday of the Year

### God's way

#### INTRODUCTION

No one likes to do something difficult when there is an easier way! Sometimes it is hard to do what we know is right, but today Jesus tells us that we should not try to take the easy way out but follow his way.

#### SIGN OF THE CROSS

#### LIGHT THE CANDLES

As we light the candles today, say together:  
May the light of Jesus fill our lives.

#### SORRY

Each one of us is filled with God's spirit. If we have acted selfishly or unkindly towards someone else, we have done the same to God. As we sing our song together, we ask God to forgive us and to fill our hearts and our lives with his love. Sing Sorry Song 4.

#### GLORIA

#### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

To welcome today's Gospel sing Acclamation 1.

#### GOSPEL (MATTHEW 16:21-23)

Jesus began to tell his disciples that he would be brought before the high priests and be put to death before rising to life again.

"Lord, this cannot be allowed to happen!" exclaimed Peter, who was deeply upset by what Jesus had told them.

But Jesus said, "Peter, your way is not God's way. If you follow me, sometimes things will be difficult, but you must accept them and try not to take the easy way out."

#### DISCUSSION

What made Peter feel so upset? Jesus had told the disciples that he was going to die.

What did Peter want Jesus to do? Peter knew that if they kept out of harm's way Jesus would be safe, and could not be put to death. He did not

want Jesus to go to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration.

Jesus said to Peter, "Your way is not God's way." What do you think he meant? Peter wanted to take the easy way out because he did not want Jesus to suffer and die. Jesus chose to follow God's way, to give up his life so that God could save all of us.

He had been sent by God the Father to suffer and die and bring everlasting life to the world. He showed how much he really loved us by following God's way. Like Peter, sometimes we do not fully understand God's way of doing things, but we should trust the father as Jesus did.

When we find it difficult trying to live as Jesus taught us, should we give up easily?

As Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane he felt afraid to die. He did not run away and hide, but instead he asked God to give him the courage to do what he knew was right. With the help of Jesus, we, too, can face up to any difficulties in our lives and choose to show God how much we love him by following his way.

#### ACTIVITY

Make copies of the bookmark templates to give out and be colored by the children.

#### CREED

#### CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, we pray for people  
who are suffering difficulties:  
the homeless and unemployed;  
the sick and the lonely;  
the hungry and the poor.

Share your courage and strength with them  
and surround them with your love.



# Twenty-second Sunday of the Year

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## Focus

A piece of needlework or tapestry, or a collection of different coloured threads or lengths of wool.

## Introduction

As human beings we cannot begin to understand the way in which God thinks or makes plans. For this reason we can sometimes feel confused or anxious when things in our lives don't seem to be going quite as we had planned. It can be difficult to accept that things should happen in a particular way that we might not understand at the time; our natural human instinct is to avoid painful situations if at all possible. In today's Gospel, Jesus tells his friends that he will be put to death in Jerusalem, but Peter has other ideas!

## Gloria

## Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing Acclamation 4.

## Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St Matthew (16:21-27)  
(See page 376.)

## Reflection

Close your eyes for a moment and think about some of the people in your life whom you really love – it might be your mum and dad, brothers or sisters, or your grandparents.

*How would you feel if someone wanted to harm a person you love deeply?*

*What danger was Jesus facing?*

Jesus was making his way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Jewish festival of Passover. He knew that his enemies were plotting to have him arrested and put to death.

*How did Peter react when he heard about this threat to his Master's safety?*

Peter was deeply upset and concerned. He loved Jesus very much and could not bear the thought of him coming to harm. He was ready to take whatever action was necessary to prevent these dreadful events from unfolding as Jesus had foretold.

*How did Jesus respond to Peter's concern?*

Jesus was very firm with Peter. He pointed out that Peter wanted to do things his way rather than considering and accepting what was God's will. Jesus knew that he would be put to death and rise again, and he was prepared to obey and follow his heavenly Father's plan for salvation for his people.

*Do you think that Jesus always found it easy to accept God's way?*

No one looks forward to suffering and pain; it is something we try to avoid if at all possible! Jesus knew what ordeal lay ahead of him and he was afraid (remind the children of his anxiety and fear in the Garden of Gethsemane). Peter's suggestion of avoiding his fate must have seemed tempting; after all, it is easier to run away from difficult situations

than to have to face up to them. Nevertheless, Jesus would have prayed to his Father for the strength and courage he needed to do his will and follow his way.

*Do we always find God's way clear to understand and easy to follow in our own lives?*

Definitely not! Often we are uncertain about what exactly God wants us to do and how we can please him. Think of God's way like this:

Have you ever admired an intricate and detailed piece of needlework or tapestry, and marvelled at the thousands of threads and stitches that together create the picture or scene? If we stand too close to such a piece of work, it can be hard to make out what it is; we need to stand back to appreciate and understand the image before us.

Our lives can be compared to such a tapestry, with God the master weaver who is the only one who knows what the final picture will look like. As he busily weaves and helps us to direct the threads of our lives, it is as though we are standing at the back of the tapestry, where we are unable to make out the final picture. We must trust him to direct our efforts, even at times when things seem to be going badly in our lives. Although we may not understand how the twists and turns in our lives are all part of God's elaborate plan or way, we must trust, as Jesus did, that the threads of our lives will help to complete his wonderful tapestry.

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## Activity

Fold a piece of plain white paper in half. Then open it out. Drip some different colours of paints on one half, and then carefully fold it over again. Gently smooth the paper with your hand and carefully open it out again. What does your picture look like? Does it remind you of anything in particular?

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## Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

For the Church and all her people throughout our world.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For all who work to build God's kingdom on earth.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For nations and communities divided by conflict and fear.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

For those who have lost their faith and way in life.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening, in the silence of our hearts let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

*Silence*

Loving Father,  
as we follow your loving way,  
keep us faithful to you  
and help our trust to grow strong.  
Grant this through Jesus our Lord. **Amen.**

